

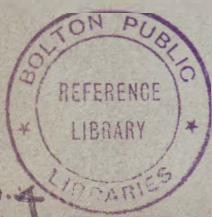
# MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY

AN ILLUSTRATED RECORD  
WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
OFFICIAL OPENING BY

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V

XVII JULY  
MCMXXXIV

MANCHESTER  
LIBRARIES COMMITTEE  
MCMXXXIV



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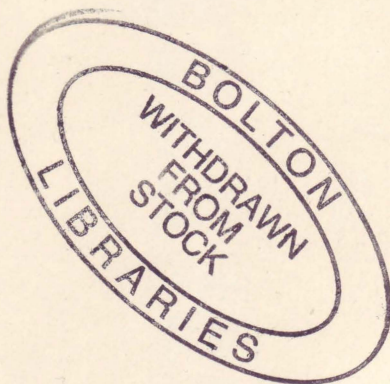


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MANCHESTER  
LIBRARIES COMMITTEE  
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MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY  
Viewed from St. Peter's Square





HIS MAJESTY THE KING

*Lafayette*

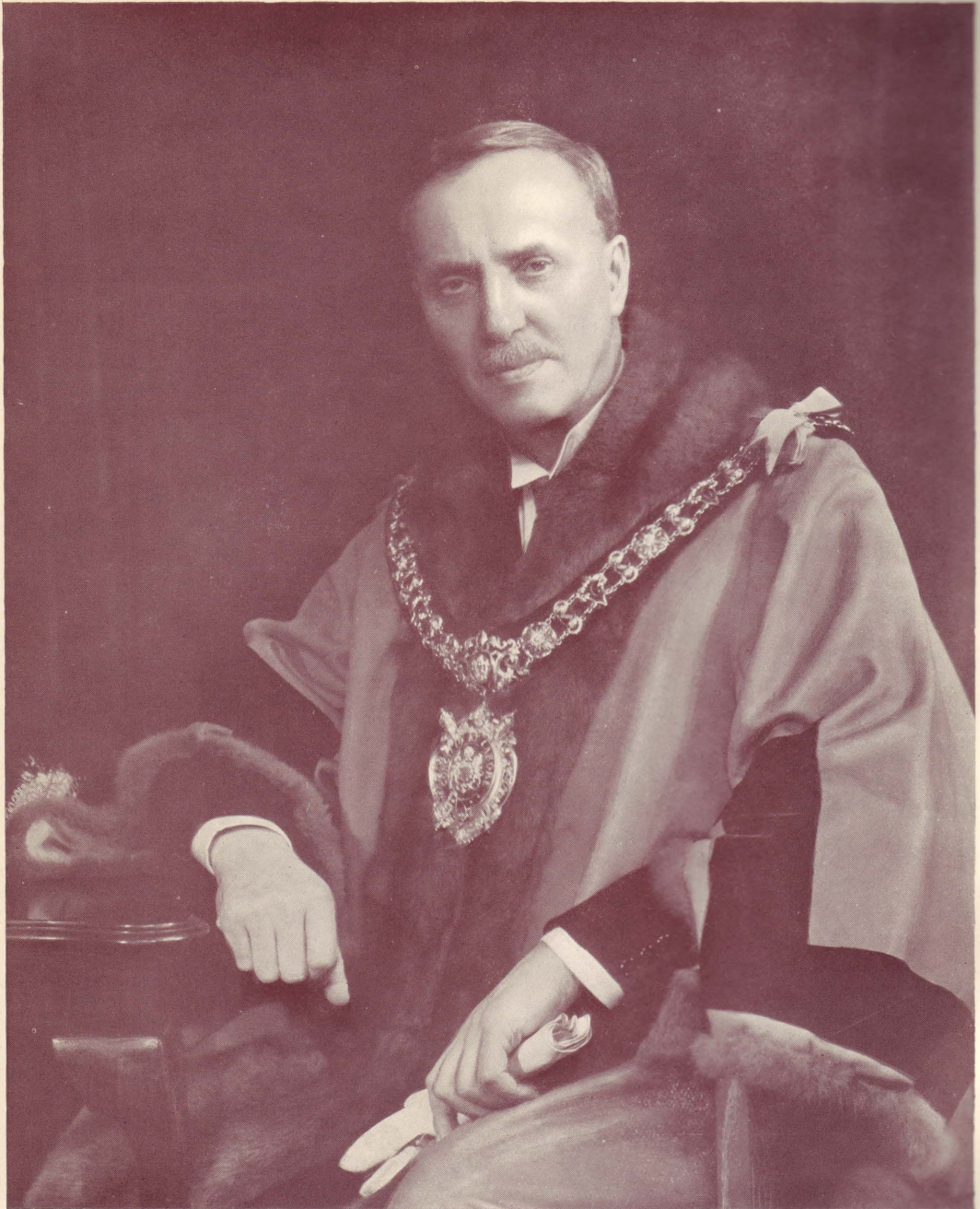




HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

*Lafayette*





ALDERMAN JOSEPH BINNS, J.P.  
(The Lord Mayor of Manchester)

*Lafayette*





MRS. JOSEPH BINNS  
(The Lady Mayoress of Manchester)

*Guttenberg*





THE LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

*F. W. Schmidt*

Standing: Councillor THORNEYCROFT, Mr. C. LITTLE (Committee Clerk), Councillor MENZIES, Councillor TYLECOTE, Councillor EDWARDS, Councillor F. A. JACKSON, Councillor A. MOSS, Councillor VICKERS, Councillor GREGSON, Councillor DE LA WYCHE, Mr. H. CALDWELL (Committee Clerk's Assistant).

[Seated: Mr. W. G. FRY (Deputy Chief Librarian), Alderman TODD, Alderman Sir WILLIAM DAVY, Councillor Mrs. WESTCOTT, Councillor Miss KINGSMILL JONES (Deputy Chairman), Councillor MAITLAND (Chairman), Councillor Mrs. LASKI, Councillor Mrs. GIBBONS, Alderman SHEPHERD, Mr. CHARLES NOWELL (Chief Librarian). Alderman H. J. GOLDSCHMIDT and Councillor WRIGHT ROBINSON were not able to be present when this photograph was taken.





E. VINCENT HARRIS, F.R.I.B.A.  
(The Architect of the Building)

*F. W. Schmidt*





L. STANLEY JAST, M.A.  
(Chief Librarian, Manchester, 1920-1931)

*F. W. Schmidt*





CHARLES NOWELL  
(Chief Librarian, Manchester, appointed January, 1932)

*F. W. Schmidt*



## LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Chairman : Councillor J. W. MAITLAND, J.P.

Deputy Chairman : Councillor Miss M. L. KINGSMILL JONES, J.P.

The Lord Mayor : Alderman JOSEPH BINNS, J.P.

### Aldermen :

Sir WILLIAM DAVY, J.P.	R. W. SHEPHERD
H. J. GOLDSCHMIDT, J.P.	F. TODD, J.P.

### Councillors :

C. R. DE LA WYCHE	A. MOSS
R. G. EDWARDS, J.P.	WRIGHT ROBINSON, J.P.
Mrs. GIBBONS	H. THORNEYCROFT, J.P.
F. GREGSON, J.P.	Professor F. E. TYLECOTE, J.P.
F. A. JACKSON	J. VICKERS
Mrs. LASKI	Mrs. WESTCOTT
C. R. W. MENZIES, J.P.	

## PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Chief Librarian : CHARLES NOWELL

Deputy Chief Librarian : W. G. FRY

### Administration—

Superintendent of District Libraries :

T. J. BILLINGE.

Chief Cataloguer : W. KELLY

Cataloguer, Lending Libraries :

J. A. CARTLEDGE

Maintenance Engineer :

H. W. SOLLY, B.SC.

### Reference Libraries—

Librarian : H. FOSTALL

Technical Library : H. H. BRADBURY

Commercial Library : A. E. DILLON

Special Collections : E. OGDEN, B.A.

Stack Superintendent : S. HORROCKS

Cataloguer : A. F. JONES

### Lending Libraries—

Henry Watson Music Library : J. F. RUSSELL

Central Lending Library : C. H. BENNETT

Telephone :

Central 1992



## MANCHESTER CENTRAL LIBRARY

THE first rate-supported public library in Manchester was inaugurated on September 2nd, 1852, in the Hall of Science, Campfield, which had been built some eighteen years earlier for the use of the followers of Robert Owen. The opening ceremony attracted a number of distinguished speakers. Literature was represented by Dickens, Thackeray, and Lytton; the social services by Shaftesbury and Bright. This first library was opened with about 20,000 volumes, at an initial cost of less than £7,000 (excluding books).

### KING STREET

By 1877 the Campfield building became so unsafe that the library was hurriedly removed to the old Town Hall in King Street, which, in 1884, was formally handed over to the Libraries Committee. From 1877 to 1912 this building housed a Reference Library growing in volume and service every year, but it was apparent long before 1912 that the old Town Hall was too small for use as the central building of a library authority so large as Manchester, and it was decided to search for a new site on which to erect a building specially designed for library purposes. The King Street building and site were sold under terms which forced the Committee to vacate the premises in 1912.

### PICCADILLY

The search for a new site in the years preceding 1912 proved unavailing, and eventually a temporary building was erected in Piccadilly, to which the library was moved in January, 1912. Additional temporary accommodation was obtained, in 1916, by the use of the Out-Patients' Department of the old Infirmary, and, in 1919, by the purchase of a Y.M.C.A. hut. But the Committee realised that these temporary buildings were not at all satisfactory for readers, and were definitely injurious to the books in the library, many of which are extremely rare and precious volumes.





AN AERIAL VIEW OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY DURING CONSTRUCTION

*N. S. Roberts*



## ST. PETER'S SQUARE

Immediately after the War, therefore, attention was directed to this pressing problem of providing accommodation worthy of the Library and of the City. Powers for the compulsory purchase of a site were provided in the Manchester Corporation Act of 1920, and, later, the site in St. Peter's Square was selected for the dual purpose of a Central Library and the Town Hall Extension.

In the autumn of 1926 architects of British nationality were invited to submit designs in competition, and certain "Conditions of Competition and Instructions to Competing Architects" were issued. Included in the instructions was a detailed memorandum outlining the general disposition of the various library services, with the approximate area required for each department, which had been prepared by Mr. L. Stanley Jast (then Chief Librarian of Manchester) and approved by the Libraries Committee.

The Corporation appointed Mr. T. R. Milburn, F.R.I.B.A., Mr. Robert Atkinson, F.R.I.B.A., and Mr. Ralph Knott, F.R.I.B.A., "to advise them on the conduct of the Competition, to act as their Assessors, and to adjudicate on the whole of the designs submitted in both the preliminary and final stages of the Competition and to make the award."

From the designs submitted in the preliminary competition six were selected by the Assessors, the authors of which were invited to submit final designs. From the results of this second competition the Assessors unanimously selected the design submitted by Mr. E. Vincent Harris, F.R.I.B.A., of London.

In 1928 he was officially appointed as architect of the building, and the preliminary work on the new Central Library was put in hand.

The site has important frontages to St. Peter's Square, Peter Street, and Mount Street, and any possibility of an open, extended plan for the building was ruled out. The architect, therefore, adopted the circular form not only for the principal reading room, but for the whole building.

The clearing of the site began July 11th, 1929, the work on the foundations on January 8th, 1930, and the foundation stone was laid by the Prime Minister (Mr. J. Ramsay MacDonald) on May 6th in the same year. The erection of the steel structure was put in hand June 4th, 1931, and from then the great circular building began to take shape. On February 5th, 1934, the removal from the Piccadilly huts and other





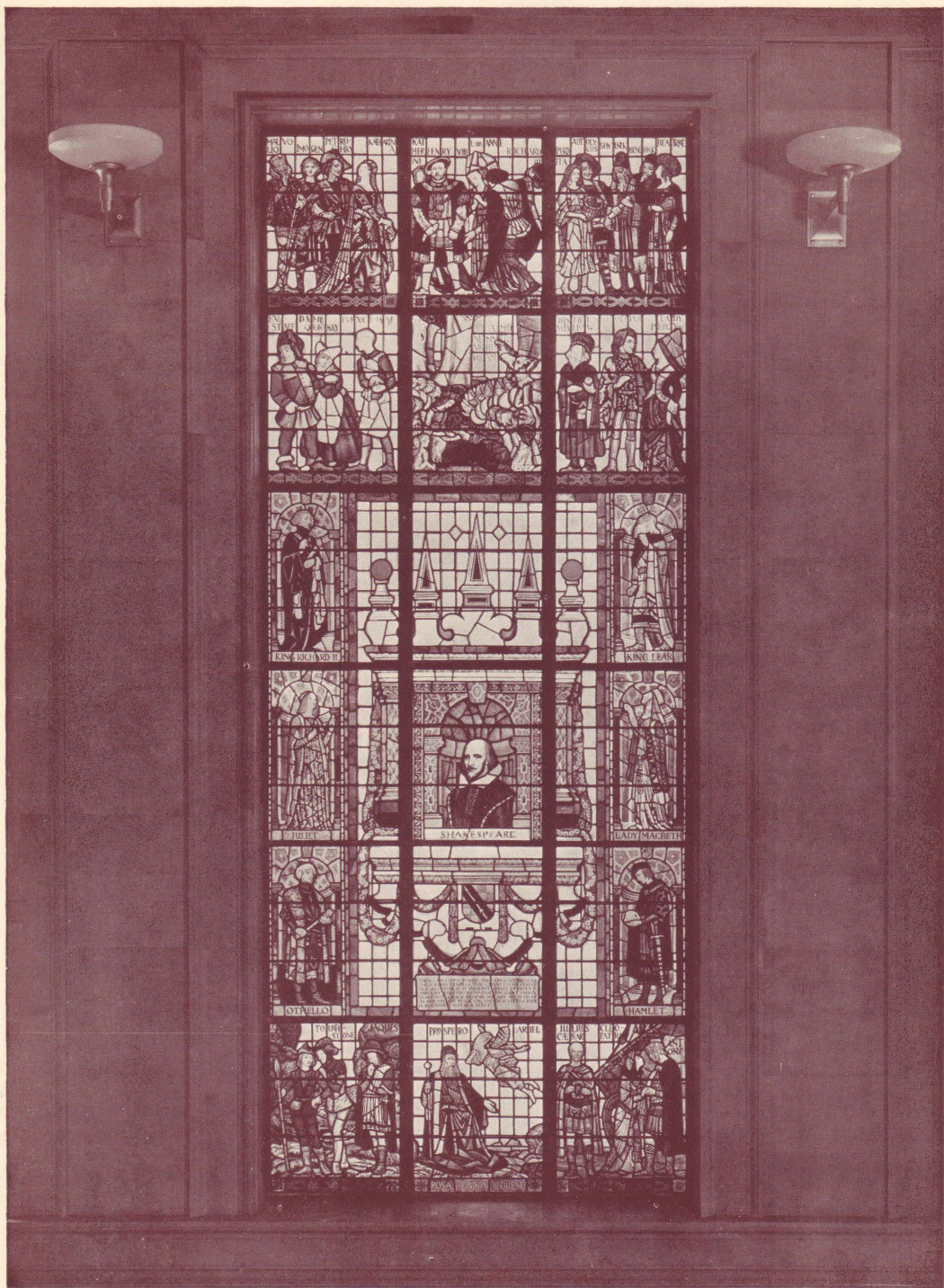
THE PORTICO OF THE LIBRARY

buildings began. The Reference Library closed there finally on Saturday, March 17th, to reopen in its new quarters on the Monday following (March 19th) without a break in the service. The other departments followed rapidly, and within a month the transfer was complete.

#### DESCRIPTION OF BUILDING

In general design the exterior follows the great tradition of the early English Renaissance. It is circular in form, being girdled by a Portland Stone wall rising to a total height of 90 feet. The first two storeys of this, in which occur large windows belonging to the public rooms, are rusticated to give a broad effect of strength. The next two





THE SHAKESPEARE MEMORIAL WINDOW



storeys contain a series of smaller rooms necessitating a large number of more closely spaced windows. To preserve a simple scale these have been recessed behind a colonnade of 66 Doric columns. Recessed again rises above this the blank wall of the spare storage accommodation. The whole is crowned by a pitched roof covered with lead. The main entrance is marked by a portico of Corinthian columns which face St. Peter's Square.

The core of the building is the four-tier steel Book Stack, the lowest tier of which is at basement level. Above the Book Stack, and supported by it, is the Great Hall (the principal Reading Room) which receives adequate natural light through the large lay light in the domed ceiling.

Circling the unit composed of the Book Stack and the Great Hall are six floors, which provide accommodation for the following services :

BASEMENT. Machinery and electrical equipment, Lecture Theatre, Cloak Room, and Public Lavatories, Binding and Printing Departments, Packing Room, and Strong Room.

GROUND FLOOR. Lending Libraries.

FIRST FLOOR. Reference Libraries, Periodical Room, and Exhibition Hall.

SECOND FLOOR. Research Rooms, Special Collections, Lecture Rooms, and Committee Rooms.

THIRD FLOOR. Administration Department and Staff Rooms.

FOURTH FLOOR. Corporation records and general book storage.

## SHAKESPEARE HALL

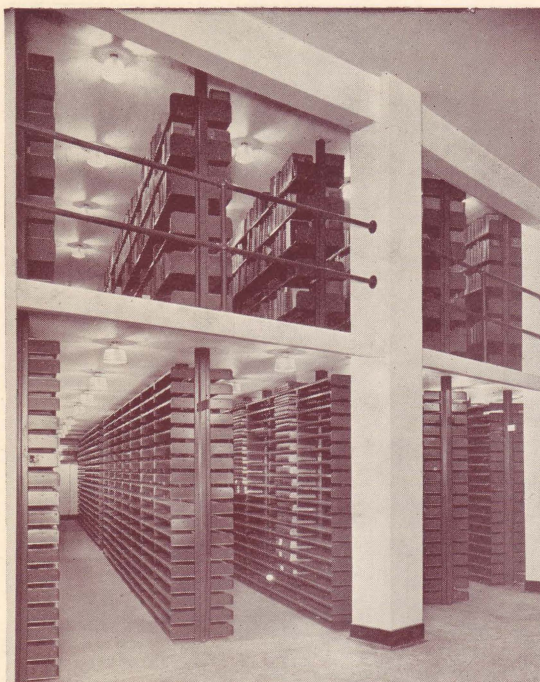
The entrance to the building is through the great portico in St. Peter's Square, and leads directly to the Shakespeare Hall, the centre window of which is to the memory of England's greatest dramatist. This window was provided from funds bequeathed for that purpose by Mrs. Leo Grindon, and was designed by the late Professor R. Anning Bell, R.A. Two side windows (provided from the same bequest) are by Mr. Kruger Gray, depicting the arms of Manchester and the University, and the County and Duchy of Lancaster. The ceiling of the Shakespeare Hall is richly coloured with the arms of the City, the Sees of Manchester and York, and the County and Duchy of Lancaster. Surrounding these five





THE SHAKESPEARE HALL





THE BOOK STACK

Third and fourth tiers, showing lighting fixtures and shelving for large books

## BOOK STACK

The stack is of the multi-tier bracket type, with flat concrete decks between the four tiers. Around and above it are grouped the various public services in spacious rooms, with natural light from the street, and direct access to the stack. It is as well, perhaps, to place on record that the stack in its entirety was made in England from British steel, and that every machine operation involved in the manufacture was done with machines specially built for that purpose in Great Britain.

There are about 3,600 stack columns supporting 40,000 shelves, each shelf being, of course, adjustable, not only in each tier, but removable and interchangeable throughout the whole stack. The total floor area of the stack is about 7,000 square yards. The stack decks are only  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches thick, but all electric conduits and outlet boxes are concealed inside them.

large reproductions is a selection from the more famous coats of the House of Lancaster—those of Henry V, Margaret of Anjou, Edward of Woodstock, John of Gaunt, and others. Around the walls are the arms and crests of the Manchester Grammar School, Manchester University, Manchester Regiment ("Pals" Battalion), Humphrey Chetham, Overseers of the Township, England, St. George, St. Mary (the patron saint of Manchester) and, over the Memorial window, the arms of Shakespeare. The walls of the Shakespeare Hall and (on the first floor) those of the Exhibition Hall, the Periodical Room, and the corridors, are covered with Hopton Wood stone from Derbyshire.



Lighting fixtures specially designed for the purpose are installed, and the flat white ceilings add considerably to the even distribution of the light.

### STACK SERVICE

The book service from the stack is controlled from the second tier (tiers are numbered from the top). Here in the centre (under the light well from the Service counter in the Great Hall above) is the Stack Superintendent's desk. Nearby are gravity tubes through which the book application forms are shot, a system of message tubes back to the counter and to every stack floor, and house and Post Office telephones near at hand.

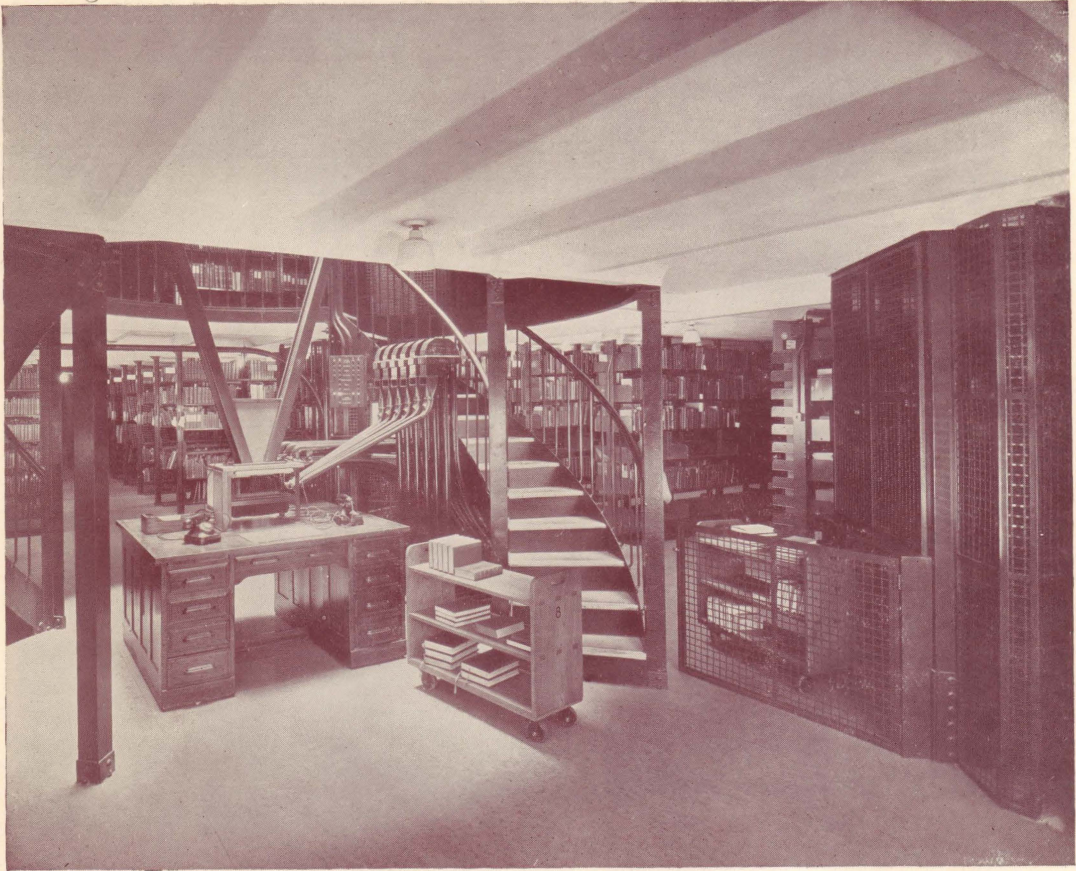
The first tier is, in general, devoted to the Reference Library, but immediately under the Commercial Library, Maps Department, Patents Collection, and the Technical and Science Library the book stores of these departments are housed, to which access is possible from the Commercial and Technical Library by short stairways, and from the Map Department and Patents Collection by lift.

The second tier continues the Reference Library sequence but, adjoining the Lending Libraries on the Ground Floor, accommodation is provided for the Henry Watson Music Library, the Central Lending Library, the Exchange Library, and the Foreign Library. Thus the open access lending libraries have, immediately adjacent to them, the whole of their collections ready for instant service. The third tier of the stack will eventually contain, in addition to the general book accommodation there available, a grilled space (supplementing the strong room accommodation in the basement) for rare books and certain special collections.



THE BOOK STACK  
An aisle on the first tier





THE BOOK STACK  
The Stack Superintendent's Desk

The fourth tier is given up entirely to newspapers and other very large books, all filed flat on shelves designed for this purpose.

### LECTURE THEATRE

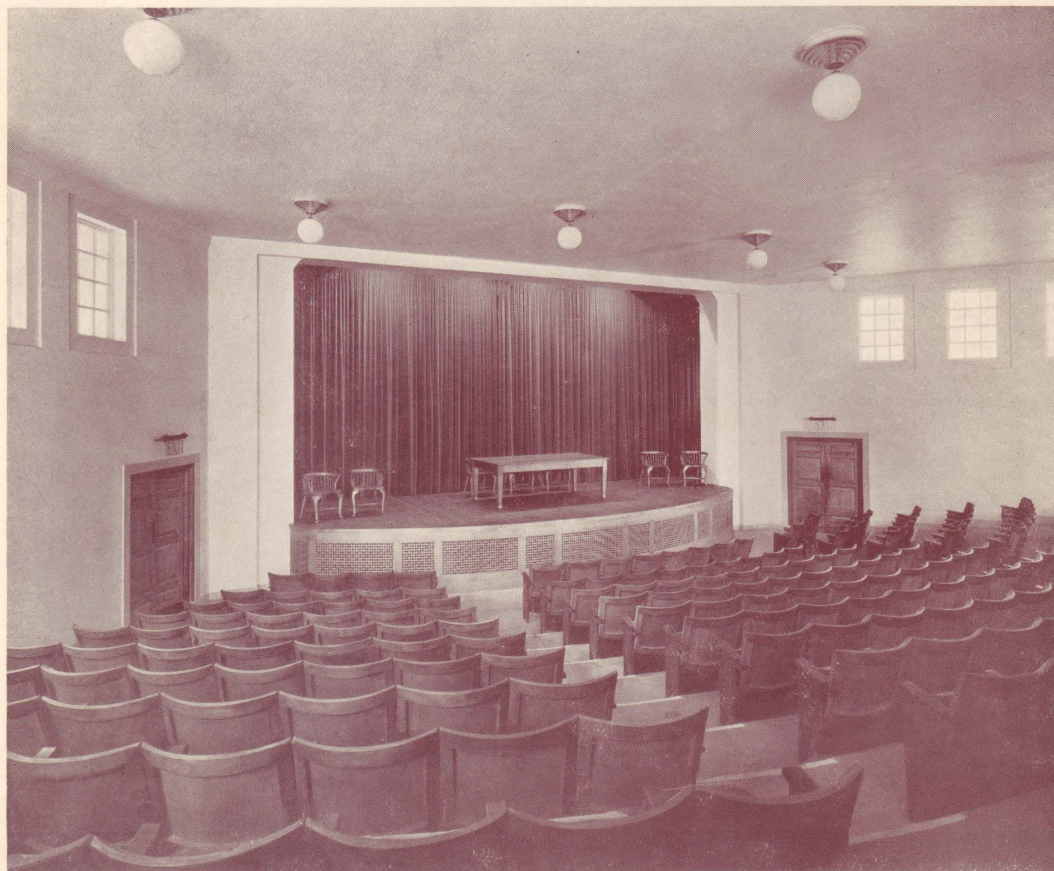
Stairs lead from each side of the Shakespeare Hall to the basement Cloak Room (with lavatories adjoining). The Crush Hall (of which the Cloak Room is a part) leads to the two principal entrances of the Lecture Theatre, a tiered auditorium seating 300 people. It has an apron stage, a cinematograph projection chamber and a re-winding room. Three dressing rooms are provided.



## BINDING AND PRINTING DEPARTMENTS

Near the Packing Room (which is immediately below the Loading Dock on the Ground Floor) are the Binding and Printing Departments. The Bindery undertakes work which cannot, economically, be done by library contractors. The Printing Department supplies library cards, leaflets, labels, etc.

A photographic reproducing machine has been installed in the mezzanine room over the Commercial Library.



THE LECTURE THEATRE





HENRY WATSON MUSIC LIBRARY

## HENRY WATSON MUSIC LIBRARY

The Henry Watson Music Library, situated on the ground floor, is in two sections. The first is a normal open access lending library with the usual features; the second (actually within the first) is a "multiple issue" counter, at which all the work with choirs, orchestras, bands, etc., is dealt with. This library, the nucleus of which was

given to the city by Dr. Henry Watson in 1911, is probably the largest public lending library of music in the world.

## CENTRAL LENDING LIBRARY

For the Central Lending Library (also on the ground floor) open shelf provision has been made for about 12,000 volumes, including a selection from the large Foreign Library which now forms part of the Central Lending Library. Doorways connecting both these libraries with their adjacent book stores in the stack are placed in the stack grille at convenient points.

The staff-controlled gates used here and throughout the building have been specially designed to work noiselessly.



THE CENTRAL LENDING LIBRARY



## REFERENCE LIBRARIES

The first floor, on which is housed the group of Reference Libraries, is undoubtedly the principal feature of the building. From the Shakespeare Hall it is reached either by the passenger lift immediately facing the entrance or by the grand staircases flanking the Hall.

## GREAT HALL

In the centre is the "Great Hall" (the principal reading room) measuring 127 feet in diameter and rising to a height of 61 feet. Around



A CORNER OF THE CENTRAL LENDING LIBRARY





THE GREAT HALL  
The Principal Reading Room

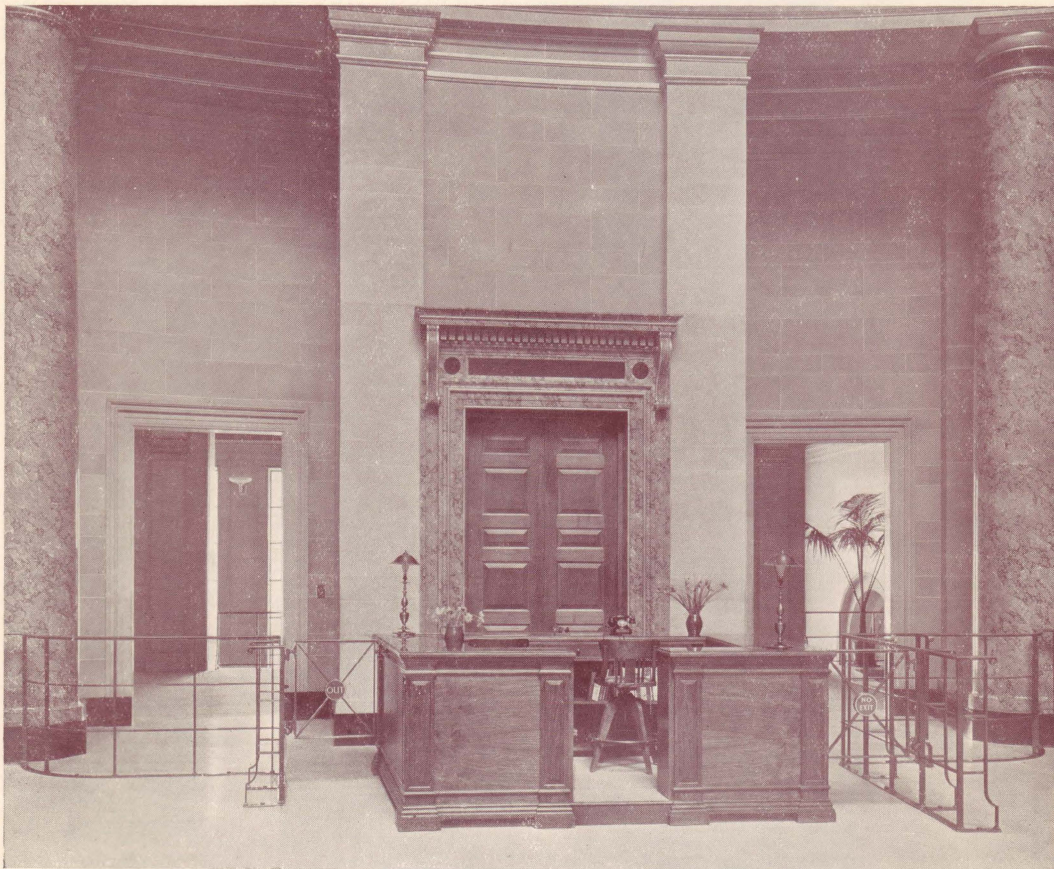


the inside of the dome are the following words from Proverbs IV, verses seven to nine :

Wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom : and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee : she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace : a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.

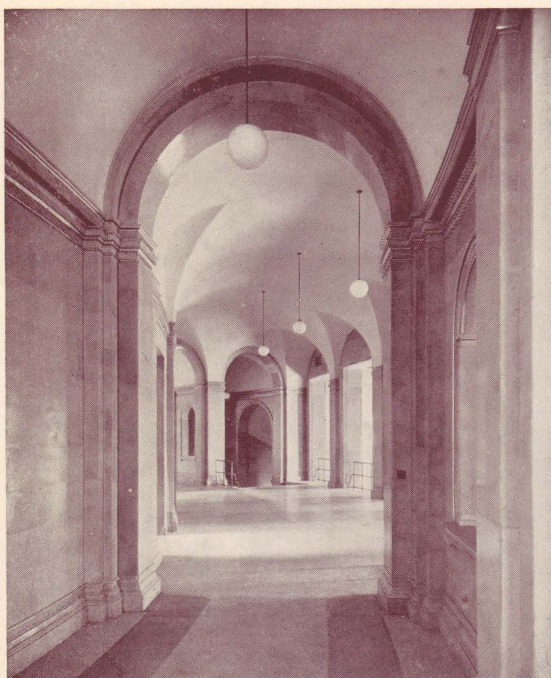
The Hall seats over 300 readers, and is well lighted from the top. The tables radiate from the service counter, in the centre of which is a light well to the Stack Superintendent's desk below.

Each reader, on passing through the controlled entrance, is given a



THE GREAT HALL  
Entrance Counter





A GLIMPSE OF THE CORRIDOR, FIRST FLOOR

to control. General lighting in the Great Hall is provided by twelve 10 foot bronze floor standards, each fitted with one 500-w. and three 250-w. projector lamps.

Each seat is lettered and numbered, and uniformed messengers bring to each reader any books requested from the stack.

Around this reading room are open shelves for about 10,000 volumes, arranged in shallow alcoves between 28 scagliola columns, behind which are the concealed lights for the book-cases.

reader's ticket, which he surrenders at the centre counter when making application for a book from the stack, and which is returned to him when he returns the book. This ticket must be given up by the reader at the exit counter before he is allowed to leave the Great Hall.

Table lamps were considered necessary in this Hall because of the great height of the domed ceiling. The fittings installed were specially designed to give a good uniform light over the whole table space, with individual switches for readers



THE PERIODICAL ROOM



It will be observed by visitors that there are no doors on this floor. This is to preserve uniform temperature in the building and to avoid draughts. Although there are six arches round the Great Hall, there is actually only one entrance and one exit.

All the furniture in this Hall and all movable furniture in every public room in the building is in English walnut, most of it beautifully figured.

### PERIODICAL ROOM

On the outer circle of this floor are the associated services of the Reference Library. On the right (from the Shakespeare Hall) is the



THE TECHNICAL LIBRARY





THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY  
Showing the Directory Stands and Catalogue

Periodical Room, which contains all the general publications (each with a box for back numbers to save staff journeys to and from the stack). Here, also, are files of the principal daily papers for the four weeks immediately preceding.

#### COMMERCIAL AND TECHNICAL LIBRARIES

Through the adjacent corridor are the Commercial Library, the Map Department, the Patents Collection, and the Technical and Science Library, arranged in one large room approximately 180 feet long and 40 feet wide. The open shelf accommodation in this room is for about 8,000 volumes,



and is arranged in alcoves on the inner wall. The wall panelling and the alcoves are in bleached English oak, the top of each pilaster being finely carved. Between these carved pilasters are sprays of carved lime wood, whilst at each end of the room are gaily coloured reproductions of local heraldry.

### EXHIBITION HALL

Completing the circle of rooms is the Exhibition Hall. The glazed bronze cases are fitted with shelves which are adjustable both horizontally and vertically. The "Book of the Week" case, in which the treasures of the library are displayed, was presented by the Royal Manchester Institution.



THE EXHIBITION HALL





THE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ROOM

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH ROOMS

Half the second floor accommodation is devoted to one large room, in which are housed some of the special collections of the Reference Library, with seating accommodation for about 30 students.

Twelve carrels, or studies (each fitted with bookcase, table, and chair), are also provided for research workers who are using one set of books for a period. The use of these rooms is, of course, free, but they are only available upon written application.





ONE OF THE TWELVE CARRELS

Rooms, each of which contains a select collection of books devoted to Lancashire and Manchester respectively.

Adjoining these are the Committee Room (panelled in Quebec yellow pine), the Chairman's Room (in Australian black bean), and the Reception Room (in English elm). As in the public rooms, the furniture is in English walnut.

#### ADMINISTRATION

On the third floor the largest room is devoted to the general administration department :

#### LECTURE AND COMMITTEE ROOMS

The series of fairly large rooms flanking the corridor on this floor are intended for use by learned societies and other associations serving the same purpose as the Libraries: the Barclay Room (bearing on its walls a set of fine carved panels from Wray Castle, presented by Councillor R. Noton Barclay, J.P., an ex-Lord Mayor of Manchester), the Lecture Room (with seating accommodation for about 75 persons), and the Lancashire and Manchester



THE COMMITTEE ROOM





THE ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

Book selection, accessions, orders, lending library cataloguing and classification, library interchange, branch distribution, accounts, and supplies. Adjoining this is the Staff Dining Room (with accommodation for 60 persons) and Kitchen, with service lift to the Reception Room on the second floor below and to various other points in the building. Nearby are staff cloak rooms, locker rooms, a Common Room, and a First-Aid room.

There is a general office for all typing and duplicating, and separate offices for the Chief Librarian (with Secretary's office and waiting room), Deputy Chief Librarian, and Superintendent of District Libraries.





THE RECEPTION ROOM

the largest electrode heating installation in the world. It combines a plenum system of ventilation with thermal storage.

Electricity is received from the Corporation's 6,600 volt, three-phase sub-station in the basement, and the electrode "boilers" (two 3,000 kw. circulating heaters) are housed in a room adjoining, with five storage tanks nearby for 45,000 gallons of water.

Supply failure (so far as the lighting is concerned) is guarded against by an emergency system of accumulators which supply

## FUTURE EXTENSION

The fourth floor has been temporarily fitted with steel shelving from the old building at Piccadilly. This is to be used for the storage of records belonging to the Corporation until such time as a two-tier stack is needed (for which the floor has been specially prepared). It will ultimately give overflow accommodation for about half a million volumes.

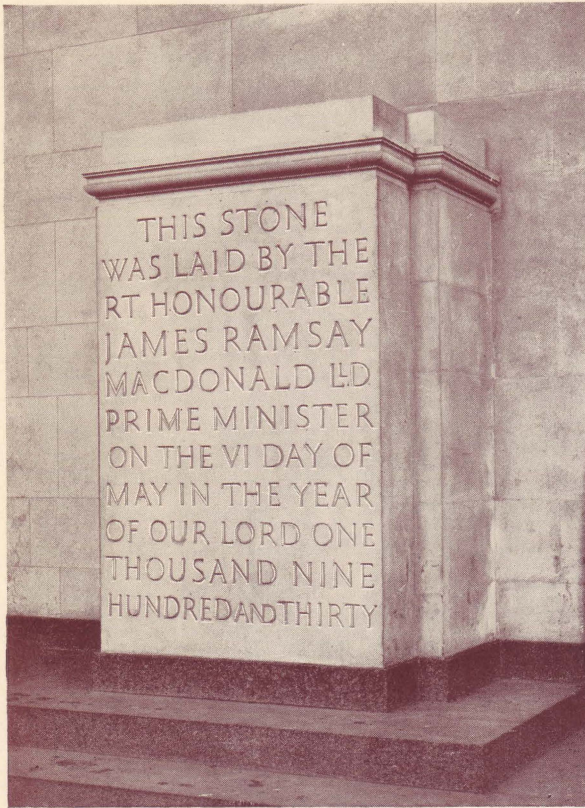
## ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

The building is "all-electric" and has what is believed to be



ONE OF THE EMERGENCY EXITS





125 lights at key points throughout the building. This system is normally trickle-charged.

Permanent flood-lighting fixtures are installed at the base of the columns on the Second Floor, and the lighting is effected by 60 projectors fitted with 180 lamps.

The building is heated partly by direct radiators and partly in conjunction with a balanced system of plenum and extract ventilation, the radiators being placed principally on the outer walls.

Warmed and filtered air is delivered throughout the building by a system of ducts. All the air used is

filtered with a spray washer to cleanse it thoroughly and maintain a fixed humidity. The air can be re-circulated, wholly or in part, at will.

In the engineer's office in the basement there is an electrical indicating thermometer by which the engineer can observe the temperatures at 24 different points in the building.

The electrical equipment also includes a private telephone system with 32 points, 33 clocks operating on the impulse system, nine calorifiers for domestic hot water in various parts of the building, a kitchen for the staff canteen, six book lifts, a service lift, a passenger lift, and a goods lift; a vacuum cleaning pump drawing from 200 service points, and a system of message tubes throughout the book stack and to the centre service counter.



# THE BUILDING OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

Architect : E. VINCENT HARRIS, F.R.I.B.A.

Clerk of Works : H. SMITH

## CONTRACTORS :

Substructure : JOHN DICKINSON & CO. (BOLTON), LTD., Bolton

Structural Steelwork : BANISTER, WALTON & CO., LTD., Trafford Park

Superstructure : WILLIAM MOSS & SONS, LTD., Liverpool

Structural Book Stack : LUXFER, LTD., London and Manchester

Furniture and Fittings : WILLIAM HIGGIN, LTD., Bury

together with the following :

BELLMAN, IVEY & CARTER, LTD. (London) : Scagliola columns and arches

CHATWOOD SAFE Co., LTD. (Manchester) : Strong room door

CRITTALL MANUFACTURING Co., LTD. (Manchester) : Metal windows

DOD BROS (Manchester) : Vacuum cleaning plant, message tubes

EARP, HOBBS & MILLER (Manchester) : Stone and wood carving and lettering

ETCHELLS, CONGDON & MUIR, LTD. (Manchester) : Lifts

FALK STADELMANN & Co., LTD. (Manchester) : Electric fittings

JOHN FAULKNER & SONS, LTD. (Manchester) : Lightning conductors

A. J. HERON & SONS, LTD. (Manchester) : Plumbing and glazing

HOLLIS (Manchester) : Wood block flooring

HUMPHRIES, JACKSON & AMBLER, LTD. (Manchester) : Skylights

KENDAL, MILNE & Co. (HARRODS, LTD.) (Manchester) : Carpets, linoleum

A. W. KNOWLES (Manchester) : Painting

LIDLAW & THOMSON, LTD. (Manchester) : Ironmongery

W. & R. LEGGOTT (Manchester) : Floor springs

LIMMER & TRINIDAD LAKE ASPHALT Co., LTD. (Manchester) : Asphalt

LUXFER, LTD. (London and Manchester) : Pavement and lay lights ; fire-resisting  
glazing ; bronze doors, counters, and gates

MANU-MARBLE Co. (Manchester) : Artificial marble flooring

MATHER & PLATT, LTD. (Manchester) : Fire protection

MAY ACOUSTICS, LTD. (London) : Acoustic plaster

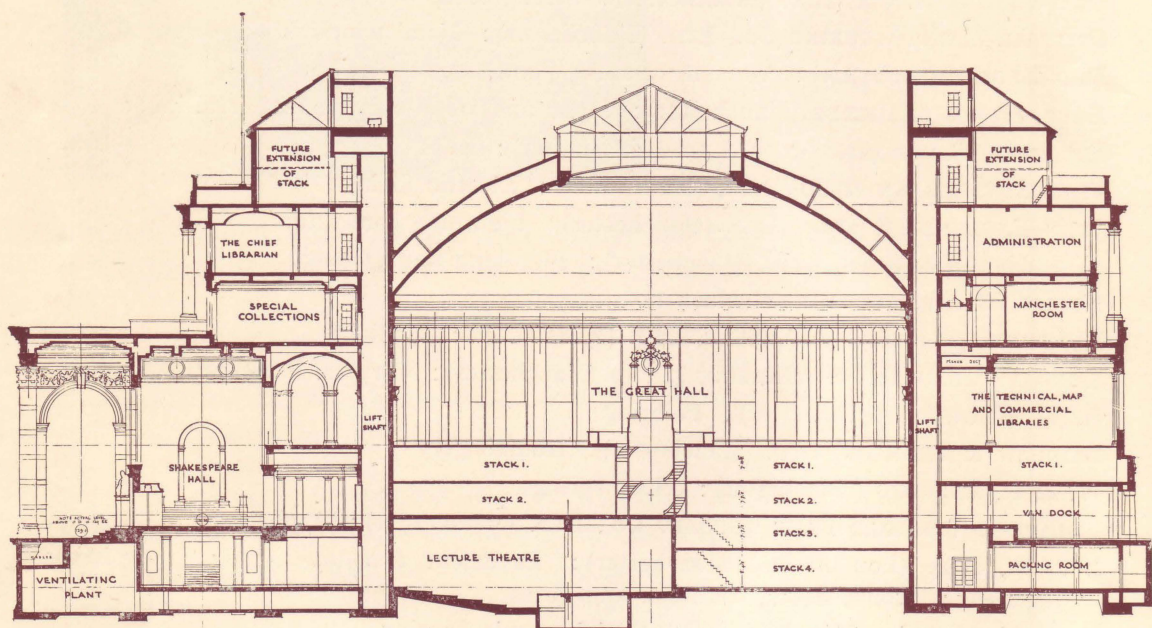


MORRISON, INGRAM & Co., LTD. (Manchester): Sanitary fittings  
 WILLIAM MOSS & SONS, LTD. (Loughborough): Hardwood joinery  
 NORTH BRITISH RUBBER Co., LTD. (Manchester): Rubber flooring  
 SAUNDERS & TAYLOR, LTD. (Trafford Park): Heating and ventilating; thermal storage plant

STANDARD TELEPHONES & CABLES, LTD. (London): Telephones  
 JOHN STUBBS & SONS (Liverpool): Internal stone linings  
 A. E. SUDLOW & Co., LTD. (Manchester): Electrical work  
 SYNCHRONOME Co., LTD. (London): Electric clocks  
 JOHN TANNER & SON, LTD. (Liverpool): Fibrous plaster  
 JOHN THOMPSON, LTD. (Peterborough): Hardwood joinery  
 VAN KANNEL REVOLVING DOOR Co., LTD. (Trafford Park): Revolving door  
 JAMES WARD (Manchester): Plaster work  
 GEO. WRAGGE, LTD. (Salford): Metal work

The Shakespeare Memorial window was the work of the late ROBERT ANNING BELL, R.A.

The whole of the heraldic decorations were carried out from designs by GEORGE KRUGER GRAY.



MANCHESTER  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

A SECTION THROUGH THE BUILDING

Architect:  
E. VINCENT HARRIS



# OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE LIBRARY

BY

HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE V

TUESDAY, JULY 17TH, 1934

**T**HEIR Majesties the King and Queen arrived from Scotland at Victoria Station at 3-10 p.m. and were received by Lord Derby with whom were the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Alderman and Mrs. Joseph Binns), the Recorder (Sir Walter Greaves-Lord), the Town Clerk (Mr. F. E. Warbreck Howell), and the Chief Constable (Mr. John Maxwell). Mr. L. Hore-Belisha (Minister of Transport), was the Minister-in-Attendance.

At the Town Hall the Town Clerk read the address of welcome, on behalf of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of Manchester :

We, your Majesty's loyal and faithful subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the city of Manchester, in council assembled, humbly offer to your Majesty and to her Majesty the Queen a warm and cordial welcome to the city.

We recall with pleasure the visit which your Majesties paid to the city in 1921 in connection with the opening of the extension of the Manchester Royal Exchange, and we desire to express on behalf of the citizens the deep pleasure and satisfaction which they experience to-day in again being honoured by the presence of your Majesties among them.

The visit of your Majesties for the opening of the new Central Library and for laying the foundation-stone of the extension of the Town Hall is a notable event in the history of the city, and it is a source of great pride and satisfaction that your Majesties will be associated so closely with these important buildings, which will be in daily use by so many of your Majesty's subjects.

Manchester has been referred to on more than one occasion as "The cradle of the public library movement," for it was here that the first public lending and reference library was established under the powers conferred by the Public Libraries Act of 1850. During the eighty-two years that have elapsed Manchester has steadily extended her library service to meet the growing needs of a rapidly increasing



population for mental recreation, education, industry, and commerce. To-day, the Libraries Committee of this city administer no fewer than 25 district libraries, in addition to the building which, to-day, your Majesty is to declare open. Public libraries are indispensable to the life of the nation. They provide healthy mental recreation for every class of society and make available for the common benefit of all the vast store of human knowledge as recorded in the printed book.

We are deeply grateful to your Majesties for the great encouragement given to the important work of library administration by your presence here to-day. We rejoice to have again the opportunity of expressing the deep loyalty of the citizens of Manchester and the love and affection which they bear to your Majesties, and we earnestly pray that Almighty God may long spare your Majesties to an Empire diverse in its peoples but united in gratitude for the benefits conferred upon them by your Majesty's illustrious reign."

His Majesty's reply was as follows :

I am happy, my Lord Mayor, to receive your loyal and dutiful address, which is a source of much gratification to the Queen and myself. You have referred to the visit which we paid to your city thirteen years ago. On that occasion the growth of your commerce had necessitated an extension of the Royal Exchange. To-day, the needs of your civic administration call for an extension of the Town Hall, and the development of the work of the Libraries Committee has created the need for a new Central Library. All these activities in the field of local government, of commerce and of education are closely connected, each fosters and sustains the other and contributes to the well-being of your city.

At no time were the demands upon the civic spirit of the local communities of our country greater than they are to-day, and in no department of our national life is the spirit of public service more clearly manifested than in the sphere of local government. The record of Manchester is a proud one, and I am confident that this tradition will be your constant inspiration.

You reminded me that the movement for the provision of public libraries began in Manchester over eighty years ago, and I am very glad to hear of the ever-increasing use made of the facilities which you provide for the instruction and recreation of your citizens. To our urban populations open libraries are as essential to health of mind as open spaces to health of body.

In the splendid building which I am about to open, the largest library in this country provided by a local authority, the Corporation have ensured for the inhabitants of the city magnificent opportunities, for further education and for the pleasant use of leisure.

The Queen and I are glad to be associated with the striking development in the life of your great city. We thank you from our hearts for the warmth of the welcome accorded to us by the people of Manchester on this memorable occasion.



After the presentation of the address, and the King's reply, the following were presented to their Majesties by the Lord Mayor :

The Right Reverend FREDERICK S. G. WARMAN, (Lord Bishop of Manchester).

Sir GERALD B. HURST, (Senior Member of Parliament for the City).

Alderman J. H. SWALES (Chairman of the Reception Committee).

Councillor J. W. MAITLAND (Chairman of the Libraries Committee).

Alderman Sir WILLIAM DAVY (Chairman of the Building Committee).

Alderman W. WALKER (Deputy Mayor).

Alderman Sir WILLIAM KAY.

Alderman Sir MILES MITCHELL.

Alderman G. WESTCOTT

Councillor R. NOTON BARCLAY.

Alderman G. F. TITT.

Councillor ELLIS GREEN.

Ex-Lord Mayors.

Alderman Sir MATHEWSON WATSON.

Alderman H. J. GOLDSCHMIDT (Senior member of the Council and of the Libraries Committee).

Alderman T. COOK.

Alderman R. TURNER.

Alderman W. CHAPMAN.

Alderman S. WOOLLAM.

Alderman W. MELLAND.

Alderman J. C. GRIME.

Alderman T. S. WILLIAMS.

Councillor W. P. JACKSON.

Councillor W. JOHNSTON.

Dr. BRIDOUX (Mayor of Mézières).



Their Majesties then left the Town Hall and proceeded to the site of the Town Hall Extension, where the King laid the foundation stone by means of electrically-controlled apparatus. The architect of the Library and of the Town Hall Extension (Mr. E. Vincent Harris, O.B.E., F.R.I.B.A.), was presented to their Majesties.

The procession was then re-formed and proceeded to the Portico of the Library, where the following members of the Libraries Committee were presented :

Alderman F. TODD.  
Alderman R. W. SHEPHERD.  
Councillor WRIGHT ROBINSON.  
Councillor MARY L. KINGSMILL JONES.  
Councillor H. THORNEYCROFT.  
Councillor R. G. EDWARDS.  
Councillor C. R. DE LA WYCHE.  
Councillor F. A. JACKSON.  
Councillor SARAH LASKI.  
Councillor F. GREGSON.  
Councillor MARY ANN GIBBONS.  
Councillor A. MOSS.  
Councillor NELLIE WESTCOTT.  
Councillor C. R. W. MENZIES.  
Councillor F. E. TYLECOTE.  
Councillor J. VICKERS.

together with :

Mr. CHARLES NOWELL (Chief Librarian).  
Mr. L. STANLEY JAST (former Chief Librarian).

and (by the architect) :

Mr. J. A. STRANGE (Director of Wm. Moss & Sons, the  
Principal Contractors).  
Mr. E. L. BATES (a Representative Sub-Contractor).  
Mr. H. SMITH (the Clerk of Works).  
Mr. W. BIRD (the Principal Foreman).

Two Representative Workmen :

Mr. F. GRACE.  
Mr. R. L. STANTON.



The Lord Mayor then said :

May it please your Majesty. The new Central Library, which your Majesty is about to officially open, was erected from the design of Mr. E. VINCENT HARRIS, O.B.E., F.R.I.B.A. The cost of the site was £187,797, and the estimated cost of the building and furnishing is £413,000, which has been defrayed from moneys arising from the sale of the old library, and has not been a charge on the rates of the city. The main feature of the library is the Great Hall, which is circular in design, 127 feet in diameter and 61 feet in height. It has 28 Doric columns between which are shelved about 10,000 reference books, and has total accommodation for 300 readers. Below this room is a four-tier book stack, which, in addition to supporting the first floor, provides accommodation for more than 1,000,000 volumes, and there are already approximately 500,000 volumes in the building.

I now have the honour to request that your Majesty will be pleased officially to declare the library open.

With a gold key presented by the architect, the King then formally opened the great bronze doors of the Central Library, saying "I have great pleasure in declaring this new Central Library of Manchester open." A prayer offered by the Bishop of Manchester was followed by a fanfare of trumpets, the royal standard was unfurled at the flagstaff, and the King and Queen, with the Lord Mayor, the Chairman of the Libraries Committee, and others, entered the building and made a short tour of inspection. In the Reception Room their Majesties were pleased to sign the Library's "Distinguished Visitors Book."

On returning to the





Shakespeare Hall, preparatory to taking leave of the Lord Mayor, their Majesties were pleased to accept, as mementoes of their visit to Manchester, a small replica of the Central Library building and a piece of jade fashioned as a lotus flower. These, by their Majesties' kind permission, together with the key and the address of welcome, were left in the care of the Chief Librarian for temporary exhibition in the Library.

All the proceedings were relayed to and from the Town Hall, Albert Square, St. Peter's Square, and the Portico of the Central Library, whilst a "running commentary" on the whole proceedings was broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation (North Regional wave length).

On the return of their Majesties to London, the Assistant Private Secretary to the King sent the following telegram to Lord Derby :

The visit to Lancashire from which the King and Queen have just returned has left with their Majesties an enduring impression of loyalty and devotion for which they will be glad if you as Lord Lieutenant will express to the people their intense gratitude. It was indeed a moving experience for their Majesties to receive the whole-hearted welcome of the thousands upon thousands who had lined the streets to greet them.

In addition it was a source of much satisfaction to the King and Queen to associate themselves with such varied and outstanding achievements as the new Central Library at Manchester, the East Lancashire road, and the Mersey Tunnel, now to be known as Queensway.

At all the ceremonies in which the King and Queen took part the perfection of the arrangements and the beauty of the decorations were beyond praise. For this help their Majesties wish me to convey to you, the Lord Mayors of Liverpool and Manchester, the Mayors of Salford and Birkenhead, and all who had so clearly devoted an infinite amount of trouble to the task, their warm thanks and sincere congratulations.



## CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES

Many messages were received, including the following :

From the President of The Library Association (Mr. S. A. PITT, F.L.A.,  
City Librarian, Glasgow) :

The Right Hon. JOSEPH BINNS,  
His Worship The Lord Mayor of Manchester,  
Town Hall, Manchester.

My dear Lord Mayor,

On behalf of the Council of The Library Association, I beg to convey to you our cordial greetings upon the opening of the Central Public Library building, and to offer sincere good wishes for the continued success of the Library service in Manchester.

In the emblem of our Association are the words *Ingenia hominum res publica*, which I would translate freely by saying that the best that has been said and written in the world should be at the disposal of all who seek it. In these times of difficulty, public libraries have wonderful opportunities for putting this principle into effect, not only in the direction of higher and better culture, but also in the more material form of giving all who need it an opportunity of improving their technical knowledge, and of allowing those who have the misfortune to be unemployed to maintain their efficiency and morale for the better times to come.

I remain, Sir,

Yours truly,

S. A. PITT.

From the Secretary, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust (Lieut-Colonel  
J. M. MITCHELL, C.B.E., M.C., M.A., LL.D.) :

The Town Clerk,  
Manchester.

Sir,

I am directed to ask you to convey to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the City of Manchester the sincere congratulations of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees upon the opening, under Royal auspices, of the new Central Library. Their Majesties, by their gracious presence at the opening of the National Central Library last year, have already shown their sense of the supreme importance of a well-organized and co-ordinated national library service. The opening of a great City Library is an event of comparable importance.



The Trustees are glad to learn that in future the City Library will not only continue, on a yet more liberal scale, to serve the cultural interests of its own community, but will also, in all probability, be the centre for the new Lancashire-Cheshire Regional service, which will form a strong link between the Municipal, County, and Special Libraries of your large area and the National Central Library.

Yours faithfully,

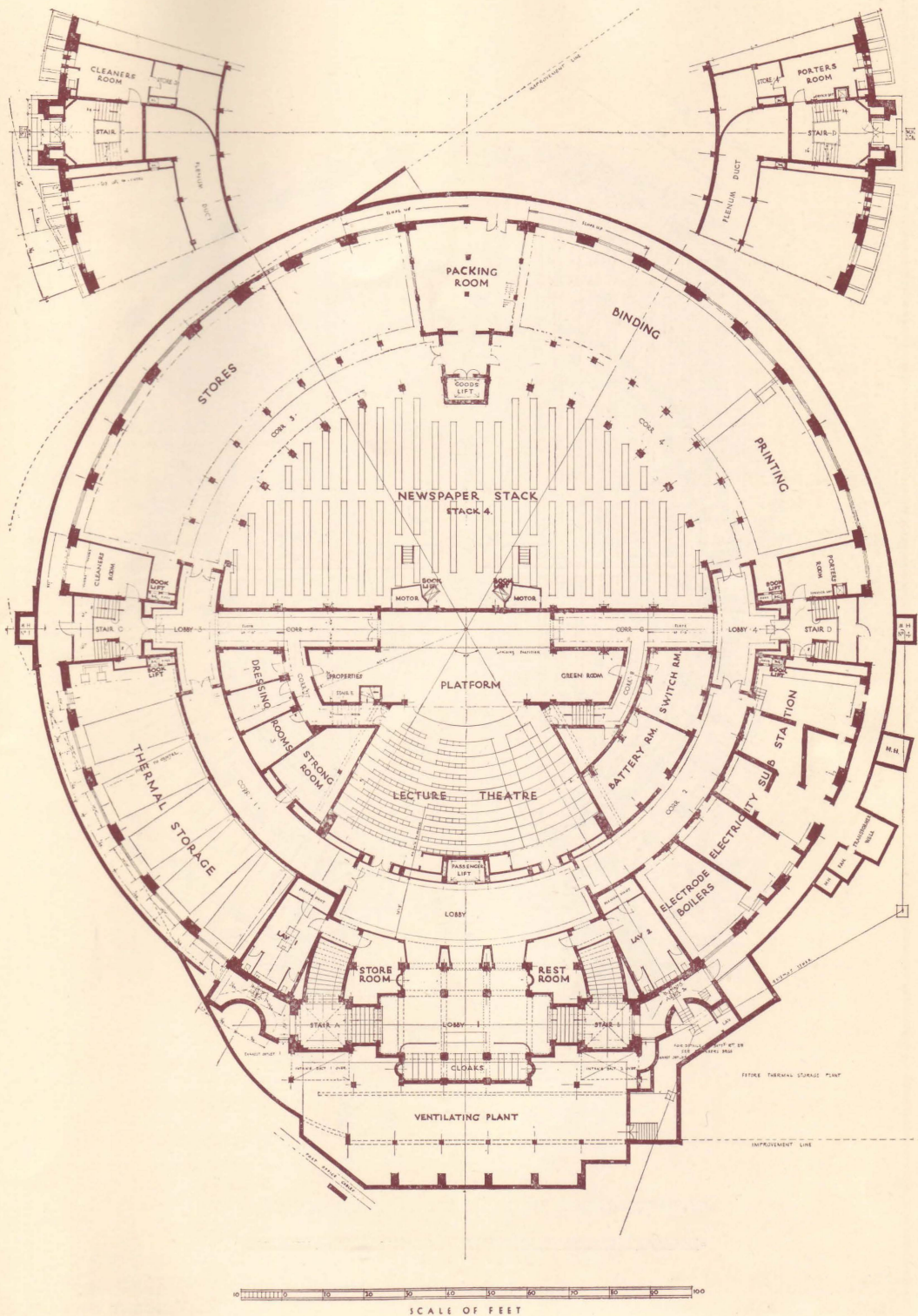
J. M. MITCHELL.

From the Secretary, International Federation of Libraries (Dr. T. P. SEVENSMA, Librarian of the League of Nations) :

League of Nations Librarian as Secretary of International Library Federation offers sincere congratulations on the inauguration of the new building of famous Central Library and best wishes for future development of Manchester library system.

SEVENSMA.



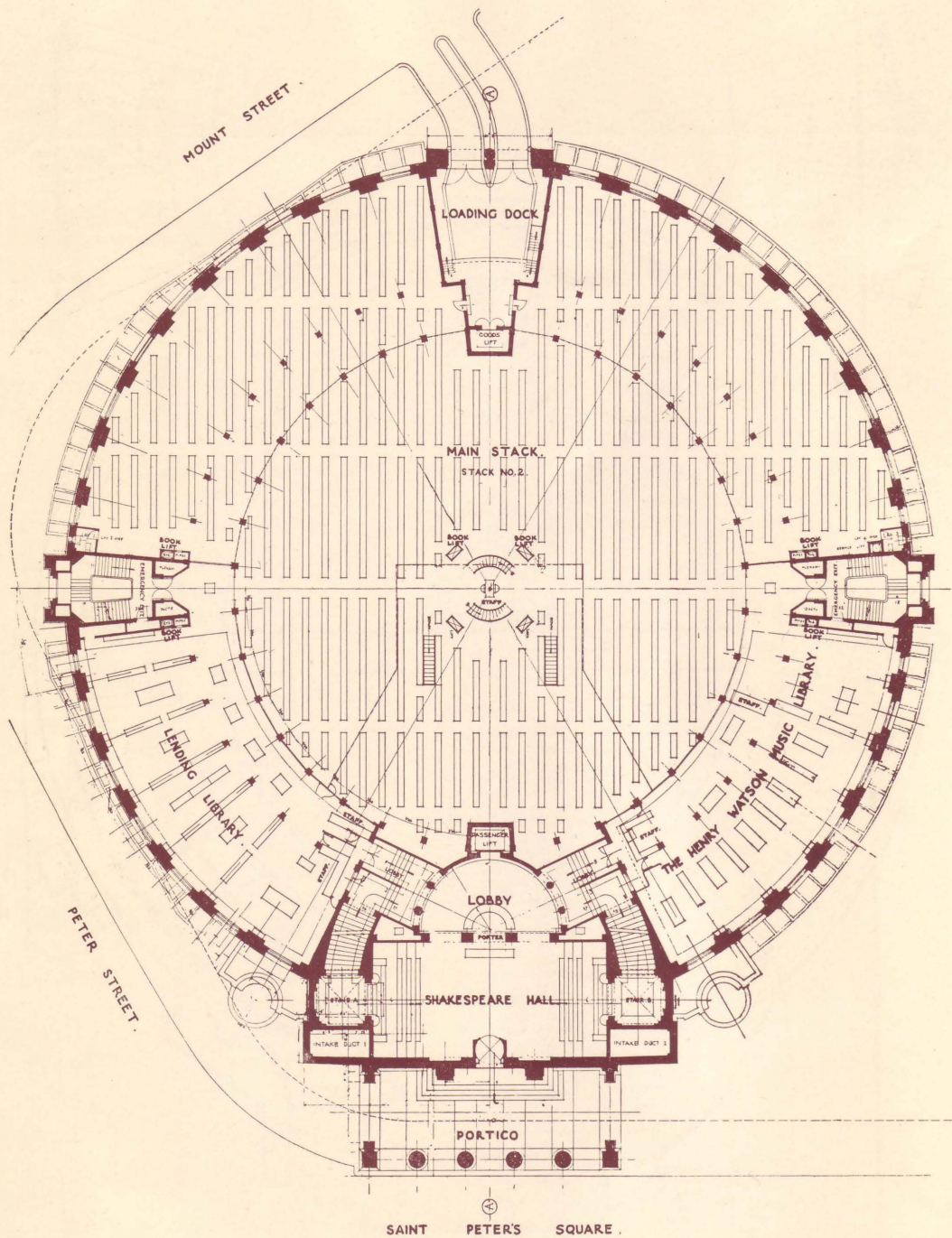


MANCHESTER  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

BASEMENT PLAN

Architect :  
E. VINCENT HARRIS





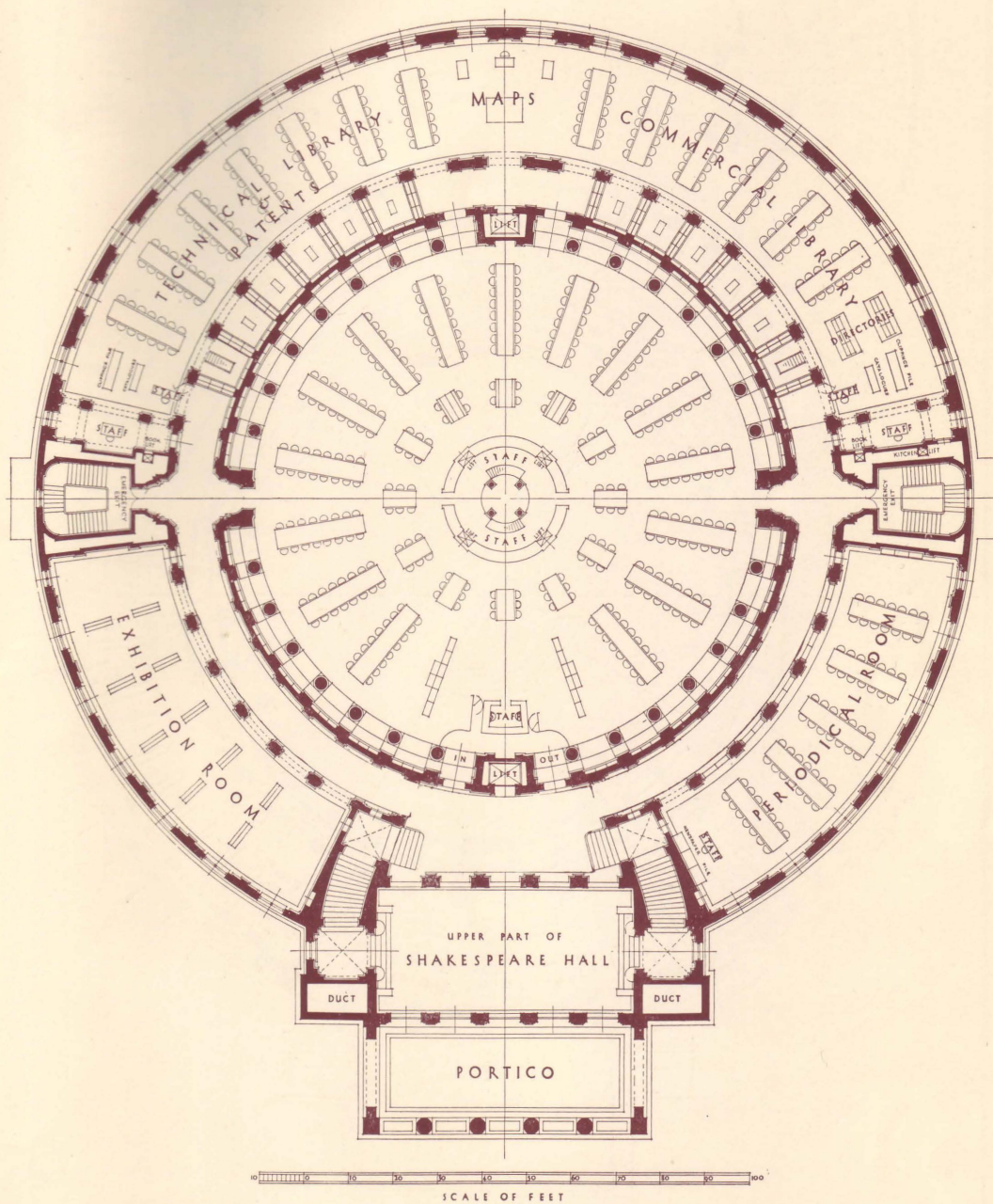
10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100  
SCALE OF FEET

MANCHESTER  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

THE GROUND FLOOR PLAN

Architect :  
E. VINCENT HARRIS





MANCHESTER  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

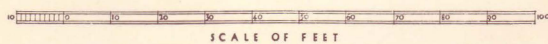
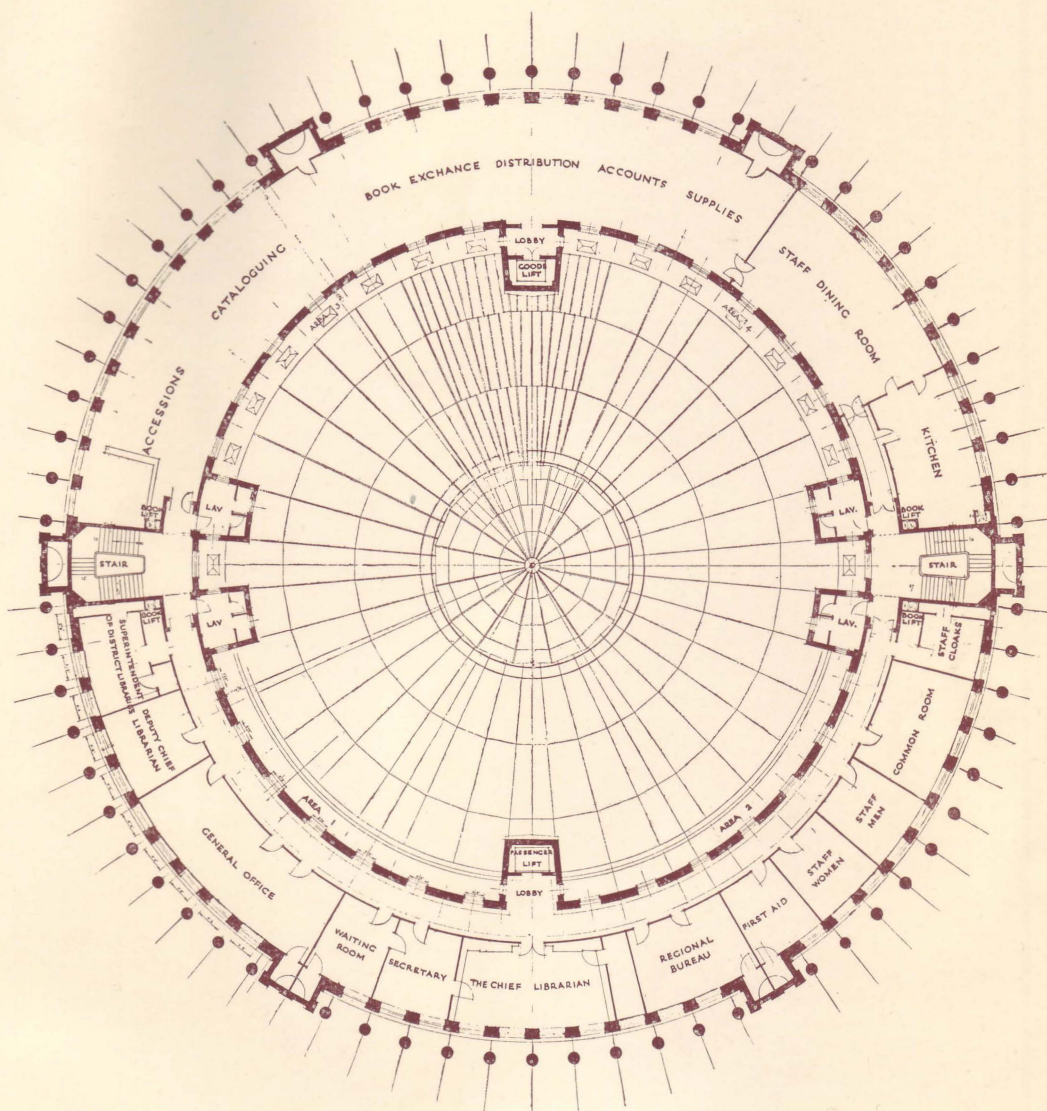
THE FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Architect :  
E. VINCENT HARRIS









MANCHESTER  
CENTRAL LIBRARY

THE THIRD FLOOR PLAN

Architect :  
E. VINCENT HARRIS

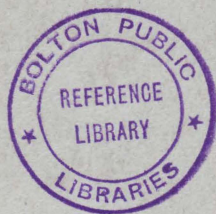


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